

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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R 141142Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1636

INFO DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4299

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, TH

SUBJ: GENERAL KRIT ON THE THAI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE

1. I PAID A FAREWELL CALL ON ROYAL THAI ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT SIWARA MAR 14. I ASKED KRIT WHETHER HE BELIEVED THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FORMED BY NEXT WEEK. KRIT REPLIED THAT THE LOWER HOUSE ENDORSEMENT OF KHUKRIT PRAMOT AS PRIME MINISTER WAS ON THE FIRST STEP. KRIT REMARKED THAT THAILAND HAD NEVER BEFORE HAD A COALITION GOVERNMENT, AND SAID THAT CABINET FORMATION WOULD NOT BE EASY.

2. KRIT SAID THAT HE WAS NORMALLY OPTIMISTIC AND, WHILE HE HOPED THAT A GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE OFFICE QUICKLY, HE WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ITS SURVIVABILITY EVEN IF IT DID SO. HE SAID THE TEST WOULD COME IN ABOUT SIX MONTHS OVER THE BUDGET VOTE.

3. I ASKED KRIT WHO WOULD BE DEFENSE MINISTER. HE REPLIED PRAMAN ADRIEKSAN. I THEN ASKED KRIT WHETHER HE ENDORSED PRAMAN. KRIT SAID HE DID NOT CARE WHO THE OTHER MINISTERS WERE, BUT WHOEVER HEADED DEFENSE MUST BE A MILITARY MAN. PRAMAN WAS ACCEPTABLE. BESIDES, HE WAS AN OLD HIGH SCHOOL AND MILITARY ACADEMY CLASSMATE OF KRIT'S.

4. COMMENT: THE BANGKOK PRESS HAS BEEN CONTENDING THAT KHUKRIT
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WOULD BE ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT BY NEXT WEEK, MARCH 19 AT THE

EARLIEST. KRIT IS NOT SO SURE, AND WE WOULD AGREE THAT THE BARGAINING OVER CABINET POSTS MAY PROVE JUST AS DIFFICULT AS IT WAS FOR SENI. WE DON'T ACCEPT KRIT'S COMMENTS ON PRAMAN AT FACE VALUE. OTHER REPORTING INDICATES THAT KRIT IS UNHAPPY WITH THE CHOICE. KRIT HIMSELF ADMITTED THAT PRAMAN HAD NOT BEEN ON ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY SINCE 1957.
KINTNER

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